

DIG, STRAUNGER, DIG.

by LOUISE LOBITZ

AS RELATED BY A GRIZZLED OLD "Thirty-Threer"

"Thar's gold in them thar heels, chil-luns," the old Man quavered, pointing to the distant mountings. "And if you hunt long enuf, you'll git it. But you've got to work hard to find the right kind."

"We'll git it, old man!" we hollered. "Thet thar's gold, we know; thar's gold every whar and we have four long years to dig for it. Our pops (not bottles) at home have staked us to grub and free lunch. We showed him our brand new picks. We showed him our brand new shovels (for the dirt). We showed him our brand new, convertible, sports model burros. That was early in the fall of '29 (or '28 or '26 or '20)—were you ever in the war, boys?"

Then we started up the hill a singin' and a hollerin' as ef our pockets were full of gold dust aw ready. We felt pretty brave and acted pritty skairt. Then as the long dark nite of Oct. 29th o'ertook us, we stopt for a little rest. Thar was a jint nearby called "Shipleys." It was all lit up (get it?) and we went in and yelled to the cook (get *that* one?), "Bartender, draw six, for we are on our way and thar's gold in them thar heels." We drank and we danced with the gals thar and told them about the gold. They laughed and said, "Boys, wait here awhile—we'll have some fun. The big strike has done gone dry." So we hung around about a year and hed a lot of fun.

Then we started off agin because we

were gone to hunt for gold. The path in the footheels became rough and the goin' was tough. Some of the pals got tired pritty quick and et and slept at home. (You still getting it?) Others sed, "Let's go out and dig awhile," so we got off our slightly-used, convertible, sports-model burros, and got out our brand new picks and shovels and began to dig. It was hard diggin' and we didn't get no gold. So we stopped after a spell and went back to the "Commons" and rolled some cigarettes. And started to talk. We talked about everything under the God's sun (and his kids). It was more fun than diggin'. We all admitted that. The ground was hard, the diggin' was tough. We were staked to grub and had two more years—anyway—to hunt. The rain might come at any day—so what? So we still enjoyed our talking. Nobody said that, but each one of us acknowledged it to himself.

The next day we went along further till we come to a place that looked as though it had gold. We dug hard fur a spell and then one of the fellers found some little rocks with yeller streaks in them. "Gold!" we roared, and cheered for him. Then we sat down and rolled some cigarettes. We talked a lot. (Have I neglected to mention the bridge?) Then someone suggested that we go back to "Shipley's" and celebrate. We cheered and started off. We had a lot of fun and the folks we met (or didn't meet) were quite nice. Later we went back to the diggin's. We dug a little bit more but the sun was hot and the diggin' hard so we rested. For months we drowsed in the sun, and smoked and talked (that bridge again?), and slept quite a bit.

Things went along pritty easy fur some time. All the fellers were pritty easy

and awfully, awfully nice. Onct and a while, one would look around for gold, do a little pickin'. A few of us found more gold than the others. But we all got a little at one time or other and felt pritty good.

Came the fourth year—a diggin'—a diggin'—a diggin'—Then the end of the fourth (?) year came along and we all went back to the city. We tromped into the bank there to dump our pockets of dust down on the counter. The bank was closed. We speculated a lot about the situation. Very loudly we declaimed everything and everybody. The banks opened again. We filed into the banks with our gold dust.

"Give us money, green-backed money—or silver—for thet thar dust, stranger!" we yelled to the man behind the counter.

"How long hev you boys been out diggin'?" he asked.

"Four long years, stranger," we said.

"Awful little dust fur that time," he says, mournful like.

"Shet yor trap, stranger," we cried, "and weigh thet dust out."

But the stranger's words made us feel funny inside. We all got some money. The man also gave us each a rolled-up paper thet said something about how we hed been prospectin' four years and how we hed found some gold. We took our little piles of money and went out. Some were mad. Some were satisfied. Some didn't care one way or t' other. We hed all hed fun. But we all decided thet it was time to git out and look for a real job. We said goodbye and went.

(Editor's Note: Since the writing of the above, this yere country of ourn done went offen the gold stan'ard.)